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ABSTRACT

This "Instructor's Manual" is designed for those responsible for guiding teacher trainees through modules III on "Parent Involvement in the Education of Young Handicapped Children: Parents as Partners: Home-School Plans." The responsibilities of the instructor are defined. The instructor's role is to gui'e the group activities of the trainees, monitor their work with parents, and evaluate their written reports. (JD)

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INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL
FOR
PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION
OF
YOUNG HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

MODULE III:

PARENTS AS PARTNERS: HOME-SCHOOL PLANS

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The Responsibilities of the Instructor

Your responsibilities as instructor will include the following:

1. Examine the prerequisite report forms made out by trainees for admission into this module.
2. Administer and score the pre-assessment; decide upon an entry level for each trainee according to instructions given in the module; and communicate with the trainee about his (her) entry level.
3. Schedule group sessions.
4. Lead group discussions and provide direction during group evaluation activities.
5. Evaluate written reports.
6. Monitor the progress of all trainees, assigning supplementary activities as needed.

Entry into Module III

Check each trainee's Prerequisite Qualification form to make sure that all trainees have completed or been exempted from Module II.

Pre-Assessment

You will administer the pre-assessment to all trainees, score their responses according to the guidelines which follow, then decide upon an entry level for each trainee according to the directions provided on page 6 of the module. You will also inform the trainee of his (her) entry level.

Guidelines for Scoring the Pre-Assessment

Question #	Response
1	The trainee should show an understanding of how to use parent interviews to gather information. The response should reflect skill in obtaining information that will be of direct use in educational planning -- for example, what the children actually do at home, what they are attempting to master, and how the parents respond to their behavior. The trainee should also exhibit sensitivity in avoiding areas that are not relevant, too emotionally upsetting for the parents, or likely to be seen as an indication of inappropriate probing. The trainee should also show an understanding of written questionnaires as a means of obtaining information from parents. See Element I of this module and the notes on Element I in this guide for more details.
2	The trainee's response should indicate skill in working cooperatively with parents to define common objectives, with parental concerns and priorities clearly reflected in any joint

activities planned. The response should also include one or more related behavioral objectives defined for the child. Specific home activities to reach this goal or goals should be listed. A plan for on-going feedback and consultation should be described as well.
See Element II of this module and the notes on Element II in this guide for more details.

3 The workshop objectives and activities listed by trainees should reflect the common need of most of their parents and be appropriate for most of their families. The workshop schedule should include opportunities for parental participation, including doing and talking. There should be an indication of planning for follow-through by such means as written handouts to guide parents at home or a plan for another meeting to continue the work begun at the first one. There should also be an indication that parental feedback (evaluation) of the effectiveness of the workshop was or would be obtained.
See Element III of this module and the notes on Element III in this guide for more details.

Administering This Module

This module consists primarily of three types of activities: group meetings, direct work with parents, and the preparation of written documents. Your role will be to guide the group activities of the trainees, monitor their work with parents, and evaluate their written reports.

ELEMENT I

Activity 1

To assist you in guiding the group discussion in this activity, here are some points to consider when using questionnaires for gathering information from parents.

1. Written questionnaires can be used to obtain information from parents earlier in the school year than would be possible if the teacher had to rely on individual interviews with parents.
2. Even when brief parental interviews do take place early in the school year, they usually serve several purposes other than information-gathering. A brief written questionnaire may then be a very useful supplement to such interviews.
3. Some parents may be able to communicate better when given specific questions to answer and a few days to respond to these questions.
4. By obtaining the same information from all parents, the teacher is building up a base for comparing and grouping parents for later activities.

5. Questionnaires may be of limited value when the parents are barely literate or have poor facility with written English.

6. Questionnaires may be of limited value with parents who are extremely confused, depressed, or immobilized by their child's handicap.

7. When the use of written questionnaires is not advisable, the teacher may find it useful to ask the same questions during an interview and to record the parents' answers on the questionnaire form.

   This procedure overcomes the limitation of written questionnaires with some parents, while maintaining the advantage of soliciting needed, common information from parents.

8. The types of information most appropriately solicited by teachers from parents of young handicapped children include parental concerns; parental objectives and priorities for the child's learning in regard to self-help skills, motor development, language, social interaction, self-control, and pre-academic skills; and parental indications of their own willingness to participate in school programs designed to help them become better home teachers of their own children.

Activity 2

The trainees' reports should indicate sensitivity to the pupils' parents -- their degree of language facility, their time schedules, factors which may limit their participation in school-based activities, their need for home visits in some instances.

You may evaluate these reports alone or with the trainees in a group session. If the group is small, the latter alternative is preferable. If you evaluate the reports by yourself, select examples to be read and discussed in the group, in order to broaden each trainee's base of experience.

Activities 3 and 4

The report (in Activity 4) of the work done in Activity 3 will be the basis for judging whether trainees have understood the purpose of soliciting information from parents. Information *per se* is valueless. The major skill the trainees are to develop in this activity is how to use the information they have elicited from parents in their educational planning. Be exacting in your demands for appropriate educational implications on this report. Examples of both good and poor use of parental information follow.

Good Use

Information	Relevance	Implications for Teaching Strategies
John wants to do things for himself, but he is so clumsy that he constantly spills and drops everything. I have stopped trying to let him help.	Increasing the child's independence in self-help activities is an important goal in educating young handicapped children.	1. Provide John with directed practice in grasping, holding, and pouring, using materials such as colored water, sand, funnels, plastic pitchers. 2. Give John guided practice in using real utensils and foods at snack time and lunch. 3. Discuss with the parents how they can help John develop skill in pouring, grasping, holding, etc., at home in an appropriate way for that particular household.

Poor Use

Information	Relevance	Implications for Teaching Strategies
John wants to do things for himself but he	It is important to teach the child to eat by himself.	Tell the mother that she should let John try because he will not learn

Information	Relevance	Implications for Teaching Strategies
is so clumsy that he constantly spills and drops everything. I have stopped trying to let him help.		if he doesn't practice.

Note that in the example of poor use of information, the teacher did not use the information obtained from the parents in the planned teaching strategies. Nor did the teacher provide the parent(s) with the support needed to make home learning more likely.

ELEMENT II

Activity 1

Some basic ideas to help you lead this discussion are provided below

1. Home follow-up guides may be quite useful aids for supporting implementation in the home of ideas presented at meetings and workshops. They can serve as reminders to parents, concretize ideas presented too abstractly, broaden the range of ideas from which parents can select activities, and serve as take-off points for parent improvisation.

2. The home follow-up form included in the module is appropriate for on-going communciation when a joint decision has been reached by the parents and the teacher that home activities will be used as an immediate reinforcement of specific school activities.

3. The content of these reports cannot be completely judged because a critical factor is unknown: the appropriateness of the suggestions for the particular homes involved.

4. Alternate formats for home follow-up might focus on one behavioral objective, with suggestions for a number of activities that are carried out naturally in the home and are not necessarily tied to specific school activities. The activities should enable the pupil to attain the objective during a particular week. An example of such a follow-up guide is given below:[1]

Objective: To involve parents in helping their child develop size discrimination.

Activities:

S I Z E

Stacking (so that largest is on the bottom):

pots, pans
measuring spoons or cups
books, papers, pads
boxes, blocks

Grouping by size:

plates, cups
screws, nuts
buttons, spools of thread
oranges, apples
towels, socks
paper bags

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[1] Cohen, S. and Jean, P. A Change of Focus: Parent Take-Home. New York: The Special Education Development Center, Hunter College. City University of New York, 1973.

Arranging in size places:

pens, pencils, spoons, forks
combs [illegible]shes, belts
suit[illegible]

Finding appropriate:

covers for pots and pans
rubbers for shoes
boxes for presents
nuts for screws

Activity 2

You may want to clarify the instruction to avoid the families that are more difficult to work with during this training experience. The purpose of this module is to guide the trainee through the steps of a successful home-school interaction. Having mastered this basic process, the trainee can then adapt her/his approach to fit the special needs of other families.

One concept you may want to discuss is that families which appear difficult to work with at one point may prove to be quite cooperative and resourceful once the teacher has demonstrated her/his own involvement, competence, and interest in their input.

The objectives defined in the preliminary plan should clearly reflect common priorities of the home and the school, and should be realistic objectives for a particular child and family. The objectives should be stated in behavioral terms (e.g., "To increase the number and kinds of opportunities which John is given to practice independence in feeding" or

"John will be able to grasp a fork and feed himself small chunks of meat without hurting himself during the course of a meal").

The strategies outlined for achieving the objectives should be appropriate in terms of parent skills, styles, and time-space demands. Ways to help the parents implement the strategies and an on-going means of consultation should also be included.

Activities 3 and 4

The tape and report from this activity will be the basis for judging whether the trainee has established basic competence in conducting a planning conference with parents. You may choose to review the tapes and reports either in a group with the trainees or by yourself. If you choose the latter option, you may want to play parts of two or three tapes at a group session to illustrate particularly skillful leadership.

The tapes and reports should clearly demonstrate the definition of behavioral objectives, the selection of teaching strategies, and a plan for on-going consultation. The meeting should reflect sharing and respect rather than domination by the trainee or imposition on the family of ideas that they might not be able to use.

ELEMENT III

Activity 1

Some basic points you may want to cover in the discussion are given below.

1. The agenda incorporates the following general steps: The meeting starts with a period in which introductions are made and objectives communicated. It goes on to present new information to the participants. The parents are then given the opportunity to participate in a first-hand, concrete application of this new information, which has been designed to be relevant to them. They are asked to expand or generalize from this example to their own individual experience. Finally, they are given a written suggestion guide to use at home.

2. The evaluation form for this workshop is tied to its objectives -- i.e., it measures to what extent the workshop objectives were attained rather than asking for an impression from the participants of how well the objectives were attained.

3. The parent take-home uses simple language and illustrations so that it can be used even by parents with limited skill in written English. The activities suggested do not call on the parents to engage in activities that are foreign to their usual schedules or that entail considerable extra effort.

Activity 2

The trainee is to demonstrate skill in applying all of the earlier guidelines for selecting objectives, scheduling activities, planning for evaluation, and preparing for follow-up.

Activity 3

You may want to discuss with the trainees the learning possibilities inherent in having an observer provide feedback. At the same time, be sure to deal with any anxiety which this requirement may arouse. You may also want to help select the partners for this activity. Make clear to the trainees who are acting as observers that the record of their observations is to be just that--a record of observations--with their own evaluations kept out.

The statement(s) to be prepared in this activity should reflect the evaluative conclusions of the observer and the group leader about the group meeting, as well as demonstrate that the trainee can critically examine his (her) own professional behavior so as to improve it in the future.

Concluding the Module

When Activity 3 of Element III has been successfully completed, the trainee will have finished both Module III and th. module cluster. He (she) should now be ready to independently expand his (her) relationships with the families of handicapped children.